

APPENDIX A



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Probiotics Research

Bifidobacterium

Bifidobacteria are one variety of “good” bacteria that live in a healthy intestinal tract. Since bifidobacteria exist naturally in your gastrointestinal system, you might guess that nature intends bifidobacteria to serve a specific purpose there, and your guess would be correct. Along with many of the other gut flora, which is the collective term for the bacteria that occur naturally in your intestines, bifidobacteria aid in the food digestion process.

Unfortunately, not every person has a perfectly functioning intestinal tract. In a 1992 study, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), a division of the Center for Disease Control, reported that 5.9 percent of respondents to an National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) questionnaire on digestive disorders had experienced functional colon issues at one time or another. (1) Because bifidobacteria keep healthy digestive systems working properly, researchers have taken an interest in the possibility that supplemental bifidobacteria might help boost the digestive systems of those suffering functional colon issues.

As with all probiotics, the bifidobacterium microbe is only classified as a probiotic when it is: administered live; capable of surviving the administering process and subsequently growing; and administered in an amount proven to provide health benefits to the recipient.(2)

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WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PROBIOTIC BIFIDOBACTERIUM?

Only in the last decade or so have researchers begun to actively pursue the probiotic benefits of bifidobacterium. Historically, most available information about bifidobacterium came from the study of feces, animals, and post-mortem subjects.(3) Finding successful ways to administer bifidobacterium such that it survives its shelf life and your gastric fluids has also been tricky.

Researchers know that bifidobacteria exist in healthy digestive systems, but the performance of individual sub-strains has not been thoroughly identified. In 2006, researchers from the University of Manchester School of Medicine conducted a study on the effects of *B. infantis* on female Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) patients. The researchers identified a probiotic dosage level for *B. infantis* that could be administered in a stable, convenient capsule, and which improved abdominal pain, bloating, bowel dysfunction, incomplete evacuation, straining during bowel movements, and the passage of gas. (4) Another ongoing clinical trial is studying the effects of *B. breve* on IBS patients. (5)

An additional ongoing clinical trial is evaluating the effects of *B. infantis* and *B. animalis* on premature infants. The researchers noted higher levels of bifidobacteria in healthy breast-fed term babies versus formula-fed babies. (6) While researchers have proven *B. infantis* an effective treatment for IBS in women, another University of Manchester study has shown that *B. pseudocatenulatum* is associated with atopic eczema in infants. The study also demonstrated higher levels of *B. bifidum* in breast-fed infants, and higher levels of *B. pseudocatenulatum* in formula-fed infants. (7)

WHAT ARE THE SUB-STRAINS OF BIFIDOBACTERIUM?

So far, you have heard of studies involving *B. infantis*, *B. bifidum*, *B. pseudocatenulatum*, *B. breve*, and *B. animalis*. These five sub-strains make up a

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very small portion of the bifidobacterium sub-strains that scientists have identified.

Frederic Krzewinski compiled the following comprehensive list of bifidobacterium sub-strains for a Universite des Sciences at Techniques de Lille PhD Thesis in 1997, which was revised by Francoise Gavini in 2001 (8):

Human origin:

- * *B. adolescentis*
- * *B. angulatum*
- * *B. bifidum*
- * *B. breve*
- * *B. catenulatum*
- * *B. denticolens*
- * *B. dentium*
- * *B. gallicum*
- * *B. infantis* (also known as *B. liberorum* and *B. lactentis*)
- * *B. inopinatum*
- * *B. longum*
- * *B. pseudocatenulatum*

Environmental and food origin:

- * *B. lactis*
- * *B. minimum*
- * *B. subtile*
- * *B. thermacidophilum*

Animal origin:

- * *B. animalis*
- * *B. asteroides*
- * *B. boum*
- * *B. choerium*
- * *B. coryneforme*
- * *B. cuniculi*
- * *B. gallinarum*
- * *B. indicum*
- * *B. magnum*
- * *B. merycicum*
- * *B. pseudolongum* subsp. *Pseudolongum*
- * *B. pseudolongum* subsp. *Globosum*
- * *B. pullorum*
- * *B. ruminantium*
- * *B. saeculare*
- * *B. suis*
- * *B. thermophilum* (also known as *B. ruminale*)

THE FUTURE OF BIFIDOBACTERIUM

Bifidobacterium is already a solid contributor to the commercial probiotic population. Dannon has seen marketing success with its Activia line of yogurts, featuring *B. animalis*.

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Nestle has launched a probiotic line of infant formula called Good Start Natural Cultures, featuring *B. lactis*.⁽⁹⁾ As researchers discover ways to successfully administer and harvest the health benefits of additional sub-strains of bifidobacterium, you can expect that food and drug companies will continue to find new and innovative ways to bring bifidobacterium to your retail shelf.

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